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ABSTRACT

A study of the effect of a principal's termination on the school was derived from the results of the research of Causal Factors of Termination among Jewish day school principals in the United States during the period 1980-85. The instruments used in the survey were two self-designed questionnaires, one for school principals and the other for board presidents. The population consisted entirely of the principals and board presidents of 328 Jewish Day Schools. Seventy percent of the participants responded to the questionnaire. A statistical analysis system was used on the survey data, cross-tabulation, and anova. Twelve variables were found to be related and affected the schools negatively. Short periods of tenure and rapid changes in the principal's position tended to reduce the effectiveness of the office and delayed the development of desirable outcomes for the school. Implementation of strategies for increasing retention is the responsibility of both the school board and the principal. (8 references) (Author/KM)

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# EFFECT OF TERMINATION ON SCHOOLS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR RETENTION OF PRINCIPALS

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# Effect of Termination on Schools and Recommendation for Retention of Principals


## Abstract

The study of the effect on principals' termination on school was derived from the results of the research of Causal Factors of Termination among Jewish Day School principals in the United States during the period 1980-1985. The instruments used in the survey were two self-designed questionnaires, one for school principals and the other for board presidents. The population consisted entirely of the principals and board presidents of 328 Jewish Day Schools. Seventy percent of the participants responded to the questionnaire. A Statistical Analysis System was used on the survey data cross tabulation and anova. Twelve variables were found to be related and affected the schools negatively.


## Introduction

Schools are formal organizations. Like all other organizations, it members are bound together to perform distinct but interrelated and coordinated functions to

achieve specific goals. In the elementary school setting, the principal is charged with the responsibility to coordinate and facilitate the efforts of the members of the school organization in reaching its given objectives. The quality or degree of efficiency with which tasks are performed depends largely on how well the principal carries out his responsibilities.

During the last decade, tremendous interest has been expressed about the effects that principals have on educational programs in their schools. Some researcher speculated that principals play critical roles in determining the levels and quality of school processes and outcomes.

Today's elementary school principals face increasing pressures, both political and financial, in the management of their schools. The principal has often been referred to as "the man in the middle," and the pressure of representing the school in matters pertaining to teachers, students, and parents is ever increasing.

The literature search of the elementary school principal revealed that there is a disagreement among

authors concerning the importance of the elementary principalship. Authors such as Wayson (1974) and Stanfield (1982) maintain that the elementary principal is the key pivotal or critical agent for bringing about change and providing educational leadership in the school.

Even though many authors claim that the principalship has such a potentially important role, other authors do not have such high aspirations for the principal. The principal has to be the linking pin between the outside world, the social subsystem represented by the school board, and the internal structure of the school as represented by the teachers.

The school principalship has developed into one of the most important positions in our society. Few, if any, people in other professions discharge a role that has a greater impact upon the development of individuals in our society. The principal's values and knowledge impinge upon many people. Generally, it has been held that the principal should be given great powers by the board and then held responsible for the effectiveness of the educational program and not re-employed if he or she does not produce.

In a summation of the articles on the remaking of the principalship, McNally (1974: 7-8) identified several factors which adversely affect the role of the principal and prevent the principalship from being an important position in the educational system. The factors point out that:

(1) Role definition for most principals is ambiguous;

(2) Principals operate within a web of constraining forces:

a. Power of the community
b. The educational bureaucracy, and
c. The resistance of teachers to change;

(3) Principals are inundated by "administrivia";

(4) Most principals tend to be managers rather than leaders.

McNally recognized the incessant demands and pressures existing in the elementary school which interface with the leadership activities of the professionally prepared principal when he observed that:

> One major responsibility of the elementary school principal is the management of his school. The arrangement of schedules; operation of the cafeteria or the lunchroom; purchase, storage, and distribution of textbooks and supplies; preparation of reports; regulation of bus transportation; supervision of the school plant; the making of the budget; and the like all make

> incessant demands which interface with other constructive, professional leadership activities.

The improvement of an organization or school will be planned and executed by the leader. Sergiovanni (1981) noted in his study that:

> It is clear that no single person is more key to school effectiveness than the principal, and the deciding factor in determining effectiveness is the leadership he or she brings to the school.

Kmetz and Willower (1982) and Martin and Willower (1981), in their recent observational studies of principal behavior, cast some doubts on the effects of principals on curriculum and instruction in their schools. These studies indicate that the behavior exhibited by principals does not provide support for the conventional wisdom that principals affect student learning through strong instructional leadership.

Strong principals were characterized as autonomous, supportive, consistent, and in control. The implications for teacher job satisfaction were evident in findings on productivity, turnover and health.

The role of the principal in the school organization is crucial. Lewis (1975) concluded in his study that the principal's role is ranked first in priority when school stability is required. The role of the principal is defined not only by the prescribed role but also by the role stereotype which the principal has set and the expectations held by the other involved individuals.

The educational operation of a private school and public school is similar. The principal, as the head of a private institution, has many functions and responsibilities and sees the role more intensively than others.

Feurman (1976) studied the views of the principal's role in elementary orthodox Hebrew day schools in the New York City area. Feurman constructed a questionnaire including four major areas of role expectation, including religious orientation, curriculum, finance and personnel. Among his conclusions he observed that:

(1) Principals' views of the scope of their decision-making functions were significantly greater when compared to board chairmen's views of these same functions.

(2) This difference of views was found to be consistent in all four areas of functioning investigated, namely, religious orientation, curriculum, finance and personnel. (p. 2)

Board members and board presidents are responsible for an effective school operation mainly through their relationship to the principal. As it was stated by the Pennsylvania School Board Association (PSBA) (1977):

> The Superintendent uses his professional and technical competency to manage the schools and implement board directions. An effective school program results when both principal and school board properly execute their roles and respect each other's duties. The board and principal must continually assess their working relationship, focusing on proper division of responsibilities.

The board members are representative of the people from the community and their relationship to the principal is affected by members of the community. Many school boards today choose to be involved in the decision-making process, and the principal implements those decisions. If the board principal relationship could be kept at this level, most conflicts could be resolved.

Methodology and Instrumentation

The population of this study consisted entirely of principals and presidents of Jewish day schools in the United States serving during the academic year of 1985-1986.

The instruments used in this survey were two almost identical questionnaires, one for principals and one for presidents. Each questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A of the questionnaire was entitled "Reasons for Changing Previous Positions," and included eight major components. One component, School Effectiveness, was composed of 15 variables that had been identified through the literature as being related to the result of termination of the principalship. Participants were asked to rate each variable as the result of termination and place a value on the importance of the item. Section B of the questionnaire was entitled, "Demographic and Personal Data," and was designed to describe the personal characteristics of the principals and the president and to give information about the school.

Results

The responses of principals and board presidents were analyzed and tested for significant difference with Chi Square. Table 1 presents the observed counts, expected counts and all Chi Square data for each of the school effectiveness reasons for termination given by principals and board presidents.

Statistical analysis reveals that:

A: Eleven variables show a high significant difference in the school effectiveness reasons given by the principals. The following reasons were derived from Table 1 and ordered according to their degree of significance.

1. Renovate curriculum
2. Effect on performance
3. Teacher turnover
4. School climate
5. Student achievement
6. Identification with school philosophy
7. Classroom discipline
8. School is a pleasant place
9. School academic goals
10. Curriculum
11. Educational innovation

B: Board presidents reported nine variables of school effectiveness reasons showing a high significant difference.

The following reasons are stated in Table 1 and ordered according to their degree of significance.

1. Effect on performance
2. School is a pleasant place
3. Renovate curriculum
4. Teacher turnover
5. Student achievement
6. School academic goals
7. Identification with school philosophy
8. School climate
9. Interaction between teachers and students

C: The nine significant reasons given by the board presidents were intersected within the reasons given by the school principals.

D: The order of the significant reasons given by the principals is not identical to the order given by the board presidents. Chi Square tests did show a significant difference in the order.

E: The following three variables did not show any significant difference in the school effectiveness reasons given for termination: 1) develop students' personalities; 2) student enrollment; and 3) school achieves its goals.

F: Two reasons, "Renovate curriculum," and "Teacher turnover," show a high significant difference in both

extreme points of the scale range. Board presidents noted that "Renovate curriculum" has only a great deal of importance and principals were divided, some starting very little, others noting a great deal of importance; "Teacher turnover" was noted by principals and board presidents with very little importance.

G: Both the principals and the board presidents indicated that termination is associated with school effectiveness. The following twelve variables were found to be related and affected the school negatively. Renovate curriculum, effect on performance, teacher turnover, school climate, student achievement, identification with school philosophy, classroom discipline, school is a pleasant place, school academic goals, curriculum, educational innovations, and interaction between teachers and students.

Discussion

From the research of many studies, four to six years was considered a realistic amount of time for a principal to become familiar with the philosophy of the system; to be accepted by the staff, members of boards, parents, and lay leaders of the community; and to recognize the problems of

the organization, curriculum, operations, and finances. Almost two-thirds of the principals have been in their current positions for three years or less.

What could these principals have contributed to the educational programs of the school systems they served in two or three years? Professional journals and periodicals, textbooks on public school administration, and research studies of the principal's position have suggested that a number of operational policies and working conditions are considered essential for the development and maintenance of desirable outcomes in the public schools. Little research has been done regarding the private schools, and no study was found regarding the Jewish day schools. Castagna (1963) noted that short periods of tenure and rapid changes in the principal's position tend to reduce the effectiveness of the office and delay the development of desirable outcomes for the school. Meyer (1978) stated that stability in leadership positions accompanies organizational stability. Brown (1982) also indicated that termination leads to a decrease in organizational effectiveness. The current study reveals that termination has a negative effect on perceived organizational effectiveness, school climate and the principal's job satisfaction.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are written based on the findings and conclusions of this study and upon the related literature. The purpose of addressing the recommendations to school principals, board presidents, and to the associated boards and principals is to increase principals' retention.

The following are among the specific goals they should strive for.

For Principals

1. Principals as individuals or as an organization, through their local Bureaus of Jewish Education, and with the participation and cooperation of the National Bureaus of Jewish Education, should promote policies that will result in retaining the stability of the principals' position.
2. Principals must have comprehensive preparation as school administrators, which includes training in communication skills, leadership, listening, decision making, management, and interpersonal skills. Principals who possess these skills might be better able to manage crises and cope with stress.
3. Principals should be qualified and certified for the position and should possess high standards of certification from the National Bureau of Jewish

Education. Greater emphasis should be placed on classroom teaching, with at least five years of experience.

4. Principals need to become familiar with their written job description which defines the responsibilities and powers of the principal within the policy limits of the school.
5. As the demands of the position increase and the challenges become greater, the principal should understand the complexities of his/her relations to other external factors, such as need to maintain open communication with board members, parent-teacher association, education committee, parents, subordinates, students, and members of the community.
6. A conscientious effort should be made to achieve a sense of self-satisfaction and self-fulfillment and to establish a good understanding of themselves.
7. Develop an interest in research in the field of Jewish education, administration, educational leadership, and human relations. Be able to develop a greater awareness of the need of public relations in the position and the community image of the Jewish day school principal to identify him/her in proper perspective as the executive director of the school.

8. Training institutions and bureaus of Jewish education need to become more involved and assess the needs of present and future administrators. Courses should be designed to help administrators deal firsthand with the functional demands of the position. Educational administration training is necessary to provide principals with realistic, practical skills and strategies to meet the changing pressures. Courses geared to assist administrators should be designed and taught jointly by training institution personnel and by experienced administrators.

For Board Members

9. National and principal organizations should encourage the boards of education not to nominate and approve candidates for the position of principal unless they have had administrative experience as assistant principal, have gained at least five years of elementary classroom experience, and have demonstrated some degree of stability in their previous positions.

10. School boards, especially in the smaller communities that have one or two schools, should select principals who respond positively to school and community needs. The following issues are important for stability and retention of school principals.

Social and cultural issues: Does the principal fit into the community? Can he/she contribute to its growth and be part of it?

Religious issues: Can he/she adopt the religious philosophy of the school and the community?

Personal issues: Advancement of career, family responsibility, and education of his/her children. The board should discuss all the possible personal reasons that might prevent a candidate from remaining in the community.

11. In general, qualified and certified principals deserve a salary that provides a respectable living, fringe benefits such as health and dental insurance, and a good pension program. Principals should not have to be concerned about making enough money for a comfortable existence and should certainly not have to consider taking a second job. There should not be a large gap in monetary standards between principals and other Judaic teachers. The principal's dedication to the field of Jewish education, to Jewish children, and to the promise of a future existence of the Jewish people is your best investment.

12. A principal taking a first position should be given a contract for five years with a yearly renewal at the

board's discretion. Each year during the first five years the principal should be evaluated by members of the board of directors or the board of education, teachers, and parents. Outside educators/evaluators should analyze the evaluation forms and give their recommendations to the board of directors. Principals who have successfully completed the first five years with a positive evaluation should be given a second five-year contract with stipulations for two additional evaluations. After completion of ten years, the principal's reputation will be known in the community and the board of directors should consider giving the principal lifetime tenure.

13. Board Training: Board members should receive comprehensive training regarding the role, function, and responsibilities of serving as a board member. Many board members are well educated but are not familiar with school governance. Many of them are founders, financial supporters, and partners of the school. Educating board members by course work, in-service training, or seminars might result in better board-principal relations with a structured framework to delineate the roles and responsibilities of each.

Principals and Board Members

14. Implementation of strategies for increasing retention is a two-way street. The board and the principal have responsibilities in this complex relationship. The policy makers and the principal must take the initiative to remedy the personal inadequacies of training that hinder effective educational leadership on either side.

15. The national and local bureaus of Jewish education should develop and adopt a document of "fair process" (similar to that adopted by the Colorado Association of School Executives in June of 1982). This is defined as "a procedure by which board presidents/principals shall have a right to fair notice to be informed of probable causes, the opportunity for a period of improvement, and a fair hearing with right to appeal prior to dismissal, non-renewal or demotion."

16. Principal termination will continue until methods are developed that will limit and resolve conflicts between administrators and board members. The following are recommended in order to build and maintain a relationship of mutual trust.

    a. Open communication between and among board members, the principal, and other department heads.

    b. Regular open meetings of the education department.

c. Regular, annual evaluations of board/principal and other administrators.

d. Mailings to the board--a constant flow of information about what happens in school.

e. Immediate communication when something urgent occurs.

f. Board members', key leaders', and team administrators' attendance at professional conferences.

g. Both administrators and board members should participate in long-range planning for the school.

h. Get-togethers on a purely social level.

Table 1

Observed, Expected, and Chai Square Values for
School Effectiveness Reasons Given by Principals and Board Presidents

| | | Principals | | | | | Board Presidents | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| School Effectiveness | Counts | Very Little | Some | Quite A Bit | Great Deal | Total | Very Little | Some | Quite A Bit | Great Deal | Total |
| Classroom discipline | Obs | 30 | 58 | 49 | 17 | 154 | 20 | 27 | 18 | 16 | 81 |
| | Exp | 29.7 | 44.7 | 47.3 | 32.3 | | 14.9 | 21.3 | 26.0 | 18.8 | |
| | ChSq | 0.00 | 3.95 | 0.06 | 7.24 | | 1.71 | 1.51 | 2.44 | 0.41 | |
| Interaction between teachers & students | Obs | 18 | 42 | 51 | 27 | 138 | 13 | 18 | 25 | 27 | 83 |
| | Exp | 26.6 | 40.1 | 42.4 | 28.9 | | 15.3 | 21.9 | 26.6 | 19.2 | |
| | ChSq | 2.79 | 0.09 | 1.75 | 0.13 | | 0.35 | 0.68 | 0.10 | 3.13 | |
| Identification with school philosophy | Obs | 38 | 48 | 51 | 16 | 153 | 15 | 22 | 35 | 11 | 83 |
| | Exp | 29.5 | 44.4 | 47.0 | 32.1 | | 15.3 | 21.9 | 26.6 | 19.2 | |
| | ChSq | 2.45 | 0.29 | 0.34 | 8.06 | | 0.01 | 0.00 | 2.66 | 3.53 | |
| Develop personality | Obs | 26 | 44 | 54 | 21 | 145 | 14 | 26 | 22 | 20 | 82 |
| | Exp | 28.0 | 42.1 | 44.1 | 30.4 | | 15.1 | 21.6 | 26.3 | 19.0 | |
| | ChSq | 0.14 | 0.09 | 2.01 | 2.91 | | 0.08 | 0.90 | 0.69 | 0.05 | |
| School achieves its goal | Obs | 26 | 46 | 47 | 24 | 143 | 11 | 27 | 27 | 18 | 83 |
| | Exp | 27.6 | 41.5 | 43.9 | 30.0 | | 15.3 | 21.9 | 26.6 | 19.2 | |
| | ChSq | 0.09 | 0.48 | 0.21 | 1.19 | | 1.21 | 1.21 | 0.01 | 0.08 | |
| School academic goals | Obs | 17 | 39 | 37 | 41 | 134 | 7 | 22 | 27 | 27 | 83 |
| | Exp | 25.8 | 38.9 | 41.2 | 28.1 | | 15.3 | 21.9 | 26.6 | 19.2 | |
| | ChSq | 3.02 | 0.00 | 0.42 | 5.93 | | 4.51 | 0.00 | 0.01 | 3.13 | |
| School a pleasant place | Obs | 21 | 32 | 38 | 42 | 133 | 0 | 8 | 39 | 37 | 84 |
| | Exp | 25.6 | 38.6 | 40.9 | 27.9 | | 15.5 | 22.1 | 26.9 | 19.5 | |
| | ChSq | 0.84 | 1.13 | 0.20 | 7.14 | | 15.50 | 9.01 | 5.43 | 15.78 | |
| Renovate curriculum | Obs | 58 | 41 | 23 | 11 | 133 | 16 | 25 | 32 | 8 | 81 |
| | Exp | 25.6 | 38.6 | 40.9 | 27.9 | | 14.9 | 21.3 | 26.0 | 18.8 | |
| | ChSq | 40.82 | 0.15 | 7.80 | 10.23 | | 0.07 | 0.63 | 1.41 | 6.18 | |
| Effect on performance | Obs | 10 | 20 | 35 | 53 | 118 | 39 | 24 | 12 | 7 | 82 |
| | Exp | 22.8 | 34.3 | 36.2 | 24.7 | | 15.1 | 21.6 | 26.3 | 19.0 | |
| | ChSq | 7.15 | 5.93 | 0.04 | 32.27 | | 37.68 | 0.27 | 7.75 | 7.59 | |

Table 1 (cont.)

| School Effectiveness | Counts | Principals: Very Little | Some | Quite A Bit | Great Deal | Total | Board Presidents: Very Little | Some | Quite A Bit | Great Deal | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Educational innovation | Obs | 19 | 26 | 34 | 34 | 113 | 17 | 18 | 27 | 20 | 82 |
| | Exp | 21.8 | 32.8 | 34.7 | 23.7 | | 15.1 | 21.6 | 26.3 | 19.0 | |
| | ChSq | 0.36 | 1.41 | 0.01 | 4.48 | 163.62 | 0.23 | 0.60 | 0.02 | 0.05 | 136.61 |
| Student achievement | Obs | 10 | 38 | 55 | 20 | 123 | 19 | 23 | 29 | 8 | 79 |
| | Exp | 15.9 | 23.9 | 44.1 | 39.1 | | 17.6 | 18.4 | 24.8 | 18.2 | |
| | ChSq | 2.22 | 8.28 | 2.72 | 9.31 | | 0.11 | 1.15 | 0.71 | 5.72 | |
| Curriculum | Obs | 8 | 20 | 51 | 45 | 124 | 12 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 79 |
| | Exp | 16.1 | 24.1 | 44.4 | 39.4 | | 17.6 | 18.4 | 24.8 | 18.2 | |
| | ChSq | 4.06 | 0.70 | 0.98 | 0.80 | | 1.78 | 0.70 | 0.32 | 1.27 | |
| Student enrollment | Obs | 21 | 23 | 35 | 45 | 124 | 19 | 14 | 26 | 20 | 79 |
| | Exp | 16.1 | 24.1 | 44.4 | 39.4 | | 17.6 | 18.4 | 24.8 | 18.2 | |
| | ChSq | 1.51 | 0.05 | 2.00 | 0.80 | | 0.11 | 1.05 | 0.06 | 0.18 | |
| Teacher turnover | Obs | 36 | 31 | 26 | 30 | 123 | 28 | 19 | 18 | 14 | 79 |
| | Exp | 15.9 | 23.9 | 44.1 | 39.1 | | 17.6 | 18.4 | 24.8 | 18.2 | |
| | ChSq | 25.21 | 2.09 | 7.40 | 2.11 | | 6.15 | 0.02 | 1.86 | 0.97 | |
| School climate | Obs | 5 | 8 | 54 | 56 | 123 | 10 | 14 | 29 | 26 | 79 |
| | Exp | 15.9 | 23.9 | 44.1 | 39.1 | | 17.6 | 18.4 | 24.8 | 18.2 | |
| | ChSq | 7.52 | 10.60 | 2.24 | 7.33 | 97.92 | 3.28 | 1.05 | 0.71 | 3.34 | |

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